

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LAGOS 09828 081635Z
ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9939

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 9828

FOR AF/W AMBASSADOR EASUM

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CASC SHUM NI
SUBJECT: RESIDENCE PERMIT FOR RAY BAKER

REF: LAGOS 9751

1. FABUNMI TOLD ME THIS MORNING THAT HE HAS BEEN AUTHORIZED BY THE CABINET OFFICE TO SEND A REPLY TO THE REPORT FROM THE NIGERIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON (REFTEL) INDICATING THAT BAKER WOULD NOT MAKE USE OF HIS VISA UNTIL HIS CASE HAD BEEN RESOLVED. THE REPLY EXPRESSES ASTONISHMENT THAT BAKER IS NOT MAKING USE OF THE VISA WHICH THE AUTHORITIES HERE HAD GONE TO GREAT LENGTHS TO OBTAIN RAPIDLY BECAUSE THEY HAD BEEN ADVISED BY THE EMBASSY OF HIS URGENT DESIRE TO ATTEND A BOARD MEETING HERE IN JULY. BAKER'S ATTITUDE IS CONSIDERED "UNAPPRECIATIVE AND OVER-DEMANDING." NEVERTHELESS, CONTINUES THE LETTER, IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT A DECISION WILL SOON BE TAKEN ON HIS CASE. MEANWHILE, THE OFFER OF A 90-DAY VISA REMAINS OPEN.

2. FABUNMI INDICATED THAT THE OFFICE OF THE PERMSEC IN MEA HAS RECENTLY EXPRESSED IRRITATION ABOUT THE EXTENT OF PRESSURE BEING APPLIED IN BAKER'S CASE.

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3. WITH THESE NEW FACTORS IN THE CASE, I DECIDED IT WOULD MORE LIKELY DO HARM THAN GOOD TO RAISE THE CASE WITH THE NEW COMMISSIONER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS WHEN I SAW HIM THIS MORNING.

4. COMMENT: IT APPEARS CLEAR THAT BAKER HAS IRRITATED

OFFICIALS HERE BY EMPHASIZING HIS NEED TO VISIT NIGERIA
IN JULY AND THEN FAILING TO DO SO WHEN GIVEN THE
OPPORTUNITY. THE EMBASSY HAS IRRITATED OFFICIALS
FURTHER BY RECENTLY ENDEAVORING, IN RESPONSE TO BAKER'S
VIGOROUS URGINGS, TO RAISE THE ISSUE WITH
YAR'ADUA. THE OUTLOOK FOR A SUCCESSFUL RESOLUTION OF
HIS CASE THEREFORE APPEARS SOMEWHAT LESS FAVORABLE THAN
IT DID A MONTH AGO AND I BELIEVE THAT THE OUTLOOK WILL
DETERIORATE RAPIDLY IF THE EMBASSY AGAIN TRIES TO
GO ABOVE FABUNMI'S HEAD.
IT APPEARS TO ME THAT MANY OF THE FMG OFFICIALS WHO ARE
CURRENTLY AWARE OF THIS CASE ARE MORE INTERESTED IN THE
QUESTION OF WHETHER AMERICANS ARE TRYING TO PUSH
NIGERIANS AROUND THAN IN THE QUESTION OF BAKER'S
INNOCENCE. IF THEY COME TO A POSITIVE CONCLUSION
REGARDING THE FIRST ISSUE, THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SECOND
ISSUE WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE NEGATIVE.

5. THE ONE NEW
TACTIC WHICH MIGHT POSSIBLY BE HELPFUL WOULD BE BAKER'S
UTILIZATION OF THE VISA OFFER. THIS MIGHT SOMEWHAT
REASSURE FMG OFFICIALS WHO HAVE SERIOUSLY BEGUN TO
QUESTION BAKER'S GOOD FAITH. HOWEVER THE ODDS STILL
LOOK BETTER THAN EVEN IN ANY CASE.
WYMAN

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